GOING WEST

Matilda Dickinson

Pioneer Resident of Bell describes Trip to Golden State Seventy Years Ago.

The following story of the trials, sacrifices, endurance, hope and ultimate happiness of a family who came to California from Texas nearly seventy years ago has been placed on paper and given to the Signal representative by Matilda Stone Dickinson of Bell. She with her family has lived in Bell for the last twenty-five years, and prior to that time they lived elsewhere in the southern part of the state.

Mrs Dickinson is a sweet little old lady, who has grown old beautifully, and is loved and honored by the residents of Bell. When she came to California she was a little girl about nine years old. She has a remarkable memory and the story which follows is practically her own, with a few minor changes, all of which were called to her attention. It is interesting to hear her tell of her visit to the Los Angeles section more than two-thirds of a century ago, and of what her impressions were at the time. At the beginning of her story, she speaks of the start of the trip to California, and why they came. She stated it as follows:

"I have been asked many times to tell of the events of my childhood experience in crossing the plains from Texas to California in a covered wagon drawn by an ox team. I have finally consented to do so, and it is my hope in disclosing these simple memories of a little child, that some other child, or perhaps some adult, may come to at least partially understand what the pioneers of this State had to live through in order to settle the country."

Much Sickness

As a child, I remember, when in Texas we were sick a great part of the time; in fact, there was much sickness all around us every year. Large numbers of the people there were continual sufferers from chills and fevers and many of our friends and neighbors died from malaria and other similar diseases, because oflack of medical attention. There were no doctors to be had and we did not have sufficient knowledge of home remedies to handle the situation. Often I heard my father and mother talking about this condition and they were afraid that some of these diseases would attack our family with fatal results. Frequently my parents would talk about leaving and trying to get to the Pacific, and about two years before father really thought seriously of moving, some people from our part of the country had gone to California by ox team, and they used to write back to their relatives telling of the wonderful climate and the great opportunities for new comers. Father would get these letters and read them aloud to mother and all of us.

Father was a '49er

"Here I must digress a little and tell that father had gone to California in 1849, during the gold rush, and worked in the placer mines near a place called 'Hangtown,' now Placerville. Father used to tell us children that the place was named 'Hangtown' because so many miners were hung there. In those days there was no regular law, but there were vigilance committees. In many cases, he said, men were hung without trial and afterward it was discovered they had not been guilty of the charges made.

Father and Sam Clemens (Mark Twain) were partners in their digging and prospecting and when on location were bunkmates, living together and taking turns at cooking and each week dividing the gold that had been secured. Father was of a serious turn of mind and he could hardly understand why his mate (Mr. Clemens) preferred to pass from claim to claim and swap stories with the men instead of putting in full time at digging out the gold.

Go to San Francisco

"Finally both of them left the claim and at the suggestion of Mr. Clemens, they went to San Francisco, which, at the time, was only a small city. They worked together there for a time but the rough, and wild life did not suit father, although Mr. Clemons was continually in demand. The way father put it when he returned and settled down in Texas was, 'Sam was out for a good time and he had it, but I wanted to settle down and have a wife and children and a home.' So he returned.

"Just before he left, Mr. Clemons gave a dinner in his honor that was long remembered, and as he departed Mr. Clemens shook hands and slapped him on the shoulder and laughingly said, 'Old fellow, the trouble with you is you are always looking for happiness. If you would just laugh and forget it, you would be the happiest man in California."

Hardships, Start of Journey to Golden West

It was a beautiful spring morning, the eighth day of May, about the time the Civil War ended, that we stood around our yard in front of a small log house in Milan County, Texas, in the southeastern part of the state, with all our loved onesaround us, many weeping and others sober, but very sad indeed, telling us good-bye. We were the center of interest for scores of residents who came and gave us advice, and comfort.

In our party were father, mother and three daughters, including myself. Most of the people who had gathered to bid us good speed did not expect us to reach California alive, and in some cases their predictions were only too true. I was but a little girl, but how well I remember my grandmother kissing my mother and crying, "Oh, the Indians will kill all of you, and I will never see you again."

Dreamed of Trip

Father tried to reassure her and told her that others had made the trip before, including himself, and he believed they could make it. We started on my father's forty-ninth birthday. It had always been his dream to go back to the Golden State and when we would be so sick, or sometimes when father or mother, or both of them, would be called to sit up with the sick or dying, he would say to mother, "Oh, if we could only get to California we would not be sick so much!

We children were very familiar with death as oftentimes we were drafted to help fan those who were passing out, or give them water, and above all to try and vanquish some of the millions of flies. In those days in the south there were no screens on the doors or windows.

Father had sold our home, and bought a large wagon. He, with my uncle, had put an upper floor in it, and our uncle had also made a folding table which did not take up so much room in the wagon. All of our provisions were stored on the lower floor. There was a large meat box and in it were placed hams and shoulders sides of bacon which father had cured and smoked especially for the journey.

We girls would often go and look at this meat and then turn our faces towards the west and wonder what we would find at the end of the trail. People had broughtback tales of massacres by Indians and hardships endured by other pioneers. A barrel of flour, and some sugar was also placed on the big wagon. There were no fruits or vegatables as in those days in our country canning was unknown and those who traveled far had to do without fruit or buy it once in a while along the road at some U.S. outpost where soldiers were stationed. Sometimes they would sell a small amount of food, but often they did not have enough for themselves, and our efforts to buy were unsuccessful.

Dyes From Vegetables

On the upper floor of our wagon was a large box and in it all of our extra clothes were stored. The clothes were homespun and all woven by mother. To vary the color of our clothing, mother made dyes from various vegetable

growths. For green she used a certain kind of moss which grew on trees located in the river bottom sections. To obtain blue she raised indigo; for red she used a plant called pokeberry. Oak bark, was the source from which she obtained brown, and, to make a rich and beautiful yellow dye our common onion skins gave the desired results. So while our garments were not what might be called stylish today they were comfortable, and the colors were harmoniously arranged. The dyes made as described would not fade.

Water Precious

Also on the upper floor of our wagon were spread our beds at night, and during the daytime they were rolled up and tied so as to form seats for us to sit on. In one corner of the front end of the wagon, close to where father sat when he drove the oxen, was the water barrel, and that was by far the most precious part of our outfit. We had brought one chair along for mother and while we were traveling, it was tied to the back end of the wagon.

Then we started. What a leave taking it was. Really, in our heart all of us children had a fixed idea that somewhere along the trail the Indians were going to get us. The last impression we had was of people staring at us wide eyed and many of them waving their hands. Most of the women and girls were crying. There was a big lump in my throat too.

But there was a good omen a while after we started the sun began to drop down close to the horizon, and it seemed to us to be a great ball of gold, beckoning us on. A breeze started up and one of my sisters said, "Surely God has sent the breeze to cheer us, and there is a message coming from the sun; seems to say, 'come on' I am waiting for you in the country by the sea."

That night as we said our prayers after the camp work was done, seemed the happiest day we had known. Just before we fell asleep we heard father tell mother that there were puffs of smoke which looked like Indian signals appearing on the horizon. I asked mother if she was sorry we had disposed of our home and left the old place, and she smiled and said, "I don't mind it now after we have started, and anyway, home is a place where father and mother are, and as long as we are together I am content."

"I wonder what the children, or grown-ups, of today would think if they could see a train of 75 to 100 wagons drawn by oxen, with all of the wagons covered by white ducking, and then be able to look underneath one of the wagons and see suspended a beef hide, in the form of a bag holding the cooking utensils.
This was a very important part of our cargo. The skin held the old fashioned skillets, which were about six inches deep, with a handle coming out from the side, and four legs about three inches long, also a cast iron cover.
Most of the time we had biscuits three times a day, unless we halted for a couple of days; Then the women folks had time to bake sour dough bread. Everyone appreciated this change in the diet.

Method of Baking

The way we baked bread in a skillet was as follows: The cover, which was iron, with a ring in the center of the top so it could be placed upon or lifted off the fire, was put on a bed of coals and allowed to get hot. The skillet itself also was heated over the fire. Then the dough was put in the skillet and the iron cover was lifted off the fire and placed on the skillet. Coals of fire were placed upon the top, and in a short time there would be some nicely browned bread for the evening meal. On such an occasion there was some excitement and the women would pass the bread around and make comparisons.
The skillet was the oven in which we baked bread. The children could bake bread as well as the women. They could handle the guns, too, when Indians appeared. Also in the skin was an iron kettle with a "bail" to it and it, too, had four legs and an iron cover. Most of our food was cooked in these two utensils.

It was a great day for us youngsters when bread was baked. It was more fun than going to a circus today. In fact, it took very little to make us happy, for life in that day was not complex; indeed it was so simple that happiness was found without effort.

Joined Others

When we had joined with other wagons, some coming from as far east as Florida, we sometimes had to use a common coffee pot and coffee grinder. The water bucket and dipper was always in a handy place and that was one of the common topics of conversation--"where will we find the next watering place?" Our dishes were all made of tin--tin cups, plates, knives, forks, and spoons. We had no milk to drink or for our coffee.

Several who joined our caravan and who were on their way to California had six oxen; a few had mules. These last came from near the Mississippi river and were inclined to belittle the oxen, but when we came to a place where real pulling was necessary they were willing to allow us to help with the oxen.

Father had four oxen. Some of the travelers had horses attached to their wagons. Some had loose horses they were taking along, and many had cattle. Some of the men had all of their oxen shod with iron, similar to horseshoes.

Fear Indians

Because of the Indian signal fires we were continually on the watch for these savages, and had been instructed how to instantly form a corral if they came too close for comfort. We children were asked not to wander more than a hundred feet away from the wagons, as it was the custom of the Indians to swoop down so suddenly that in many cases they managed to secure a boy or girl.

One night while mother was reading from the Bible she came to that part which said, "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones...." We asked her if God hated the Indians. There was a strange look on her worn face as she said: "No, darlings, I don't think so." We could not help but wonder about this.

Soonwe were joined by two other teams, and one of them had four mules. One of our oxen was a large cream colored creature named "Lamb. His mate on the wheel was a large solid red ox named "Stout," and when he would put one of his feet down he did it in such a way as if to say, "I'll get there; you, bet, I'll get there." One day I asked my sister if she thought Stout could think, and she said yes.

"What would he say if he could talk?" I inquired. "Oh" she replied, "he would say with his mouth just what he is trying to say with his feet--'I will get to California and bring you safe behind me.'

Optimistic Ox

The other ox was named Lamb. We children named him, and we loved him. He had a large open face, and was the most optimistic looking animal I have ever seen. He seemed to be trying to say; "I'll do my best, no matter what happens; I'll do my best.

Sometimes we felt that Lamb could teach us a few things, and while he was only a beast, sometimes, when we were discouraged, we would go out there a little ways from the wagon where he was resting and gain a little inspiration from him.

There were plenty of rattlesnakes and we were warned to watch out for them. It was hard not to be able to wander out on the prairie in the moonlight after the sun had gone down. The moonbeams added a strange beauty to what in daylight had appeared to be a dreary outlook. Before bedtime we used to sit there in the light of the moon with our faces to the west and wonder about the future. Then came the evening prayers and good night.

We remained in our camp on the Texas prairie seven days waiting for more wagons to join us and they gradually drifted in from different directions until we had a cavalcade of about seventy-five wagons. Many of the newcomers were Civil War veterans who had come west with California as their goal hoping to recoup their fortunes.

We started traveling in a northerly direction, and after traveling a few hours the man who had been elected as foreman of the train said that we were in the heart of the Indian country, and that they were unfriendly. We had seen goodly numbers of the Comanche Indians, and the foreman, who knew a great deal about the various tribes, said the Comanches were great fighters and showed no mercy to prisoners, so if we engaged in a battle with them there must be no surrender.

Indian Signs

Each day we saw Indian signs, as the grown-ups called it, and now and then a small band of warriors would come near enough for us to see them, but they kept out of rifle range. Each of the men in our company was warned not to fire the first shot, but to try and use peaceable means with the Indians if possible.

The second day after we had started in earnest on the long trail we camped among some small oak trees, and the wagons were formed into a circle with all of the women and children and driving stock on the inside. The men were instructed to have their guns ready for action, and through all of that night they were stationed around the wagons as guards. Though I was only 9 years old the horror of the situation drove all sleep from my eyes.

All of the children forgot about their games and instead of playing, they gathered together inside the corral and talked in whispers of what they would do. Mother had an ax which she intended to use in case of an emergency; there were not enough guns to go around. Powder was very valuable and all of the men were ordered not to shoot unless they were sure of hitting their target.

Never Forget

If I could live to be a thousand years old, I could not forget the picture of my mother, sitting on her old chair inside the corral with an ax in her hand, a brooding, but expectant look on her face, as she peered through the spokes of the wheels and examined the surrounding country. Some of the women, and now and then one of the older boys and girls carried guns, and all of them had been instructed to shoot to kill. One of the women was considered to be the best shot in the whole group including both men and women.

The Indians kept coming closer, and circled our camp time and time again, trying apparently, to note the number of people. They seemed to understand that they were safe until they had started the fight. While we girls became more and more frightened, we could not help but note how carefully the Indians reconnoitered, riding on the side of their ponies fartherest from the camp, and looking us over from under the ponies' necks.

Finally they began firing and it became apparent that they had decided they had enough warriors to overcome us. Towards dusk it seemed as though there must have been more than a hundred Indians surrounding us. It was the first time some of us youngsters had heard the whine of bullets as they zipped through the air, and in this case ignorance was bliss. Some of the savages made an attempt a little later to crawl up to the wagons, but they failed to reach their destination.

We were very brave at first, but when we heard someone say that the foreman had been hit and was seriously wounded and that there was no one to direct the defense, we rushed to mother, dear, sweet, gentle, but heroic mother, who did not know the meaning of fear.

Holding Ax

She was standing at the back of the wagon holding the big ax firmly in her small hands. We grabbed hold of her dress and began crying, and then, as she turned and drew us to her, I for one, began to understand just how a little chick might feel when it was rushing from danger to snuggle under the protecting wings of the mother hen.

Before the night was over it seemed that the Indians had become discouraged, for they drew away, and then we learned that the foreman was unhurt, and that was very good news indeed. God, in His mercy and wisdom, has so formed children that they soon lose the effects of fright, and so it was with me. I might say here, that from the night just told about until we reached Fort Yuma on the Colorado river we were continually contacting hostile Indians.

We were traveling along on the prairie one hot day, when we came to the banks of a small but beautiful river, and we were told to fill everything we had with water for we would not be able to get any more for three or four days, so we filled our 15-gallon barrel.

Soon we were on the staked plains or the great Texas desert, as it was called at that time. The days were terribly hot, and the women and children suffered. What strange thoughts a little girl can have at such a time. The desert tortured us, the men became pessimistic, and the women cried. There was the fury of the sand storms and the blinding, merciless glare of the sun; some of the children were very ill. The water we had became stale, and we could have but a sup at a time, because it was so precious.

For the benefit of the children of today, I might say that half a tin cup of water meant more to me then and I derived more real enjoyment from it than modern youth could possibly imagine. We youngsters would have it as a common topic of conversation, and wonder what our allotment would be at eventide. We never asked for water.

The day following the one described we ran into the largest herd of buffalo I have ever seen and they were charging directly towards our wagon train.

One of the worst ordeals through which we passed was when we traveled across the staked plains of Texas. This was considered to be one of the driest spots in the United States, with what was said to be only four and a half inches of rainfall a year.

We had not expected to see any buffalo in such a terrible country, and so were very much startled when we learned that a large herd was stampeding toward our wagon train. There was a hurried consultation among the adults and soon afterwards the wagons were formed in a double line, and behind them were the oxen, loose stock and the women and children.

The men went out ahead of the wagons and when they had arrived within rifle shot of the herd, they fired at the leaders, but without avail, as they kept thundering on towards the wagons. A number of Indians, who were supposed to be Apaches, out of their own territory, were attempting to get out of the way of the stampede.

At first we could not see anything but a great cloud of dust, which drew continually nearer to the wagons, then suddenly, out of it appeared the leaders. When they sighted the large number of wagons they made an attempt to swerve to the left. Our animals were practically beyond control through fright, and the women of the train made a desperate effort to prevent them breaking away.

Struck Wagons

Finally through the efforts of the men of the party and because of the right of the beasts they began to turn and by the time they had reached the wagons, all but a few hundred had passed to the left. They came with their heads down and many of them struck the wagons being continually pushed ahead by those in the rear. Some broke through our defense and passed on, leaving behind a thick cloud of dust. Two of the largest animals came up against our wagon with a crash and a moment later others followed until the wagon seemed about to tip over. My oldest sister, Margaret, and I, had the cover of our wagon raised and we could have put out our hands and touched some of them as they crashed--but we didn't.

Really it seemed they were as frightened as we were and simply wanted to get away. Some of the buffaloes which had been shot were skinned and the flesh prepared for eating. However, we girls did not consume much of this meat as it took us a long time to get over the scare. For three more days and nights we traveled on that dry and dusty desert, only stopping long enough in the mornings and evenings to eat and let the teams have a short rest. We had to keep going as there was no water or food for the teams. Mother allowed us a small drink at morning noon and late in the evening. At other times during the day we became so thirsty that our tongues swelled to the extent we could hardly talk.

Thirst Unbearable

Sometimes when one of the children found thirst unbearable, a teaspoonful of water was given. On the last day of the desert drive the oxen and other animals became wildly excited and tore along the trail until some of them would fall from thirst and hunger, then mother would take a quart of our precious water and give it to them in a pan--a quart to each oxen. Much of the loose stock could not be controlled and raced across the remaining miles of desert to find water.

They found water--and arsenic. Most of them died in a few hours. The foolish beasts had not waited until they reached the river but drank from the first pool they found. Many of the children when they saw the pools, cried out happily and made a rush to get a really satisfactory drink. Fortunately, all were prevented from drinking. Some of the men knew the desert, and showed us children the bones of animals and men who had drank and died there.

Later we reached a rapidly flowing stream of red, muddy looking water, and the drivers said it was the Pecos river. The only way we could use the water was to fill all of our vessels with it and let the sediment settle to the bottom. There was always two or three inches of red, sticky clay in the bottom of each vessel. We traveled down that muddy stream for about two weeks, and when we left it, started in a southwest direction.

Mother Sick

Our mother was sick, as were many of the women in the train, and we placed some quilts and a pillow on the ground near the wagon where she could rest when we stopped at the edge of another little river. I took a dipper, and ran to where father and the other men were filling the barrels and other utensils with water. He filled my dipper and I hurried back to mother with the words, "Its clear ma; it's clear." She raised her head and began to drink, then she threw the water away and said, "What did you put in it?" The water of that stream was as bitter as if we had put quinine in it. The river was named "Bitter Members."

Shortly after this, one day we did not break camp, as usual, and there seemed to be an uneasy, worried look on Mother's face and on the faces of some of the other women we were acquainted with. Then we were told that Mrs Shaw, one of the younger married women, had a little baby boy.

It might be well to remember that the 300 people who occupied the 75 wagons in our train were just as much of a community as any small town would be. We had a foreman, or a "chairman." We had a court, a relief committee, a doctor, in fact we hadwhat might be termed a community life without the community atmosphere. And this was the first baby in our "community."

It was the talk of the "town," and both men and women were eager to wait their turn so they could get a glimnse of the little fellow. Later the shaws occupied a unique place in California history.

Happiest Events

Soon we came into a great patch of wild blueberries. This was one of the happiest events of the eventful trip. How many little girls ever saw wild blueberries growing? I wonder? Soon our mouths, fingers and faces also were as blue as the berries. How all the little boys and girls who had been shut up in hot wagons longing for fruit and vegetables enjoyed picking and eating the little berries.

The mothers enjoyed the fun and pleasure of the berries.

The next day there were several consultations among the men, and extra precaution was taken to safeguard all of those in the wagon train. I asked father what had caused the trouble, and he looked rather grim as he told us that we had Apache country. This was enough, for we all had heard about the Apaches and their merciless tactics. We forgot about the blueberries.

Just as we were about to enter the Apache country we met a small calvacade of people, all heavily armed and apparently able to take care of themselves in the Indian country. They were going back to the east.

We stopped and had a chat with them. They told us they had just come from California and that it was a terrible place with a great desert, hot winds, merciless Indians, and no opportunities. They also said that there was no more gold and we might as well turn around and go back to Texas. Besides, they said the country directly ahead of us was full of the dread Apaches and if we went on we could soon contact them.

This was news most startling and certainly it was disheartening. We did not know what to do, and this is where the value of real leadership was evidenced. We had men and women in our party who had a sublime faith in the future of the Golden state. One man said, "We may fail, but we will have made a trail thus far for those who come along behind."

Gold of Sunshine

One of the men in our train, a tall and stern looking man, came forward and said, "Sirs, we are not making our way to California to try and secure the yellow gold in the mines, but we are seeking the gold that lies in the sunshine out there, the satisfaction that will come from wresting a living from the soil, and not only hope, but expect to catch and hold an inspiration from the mighty western sea."

He raised both hands as he spoke, and his face shone. He talked for quite a while after he had finished, another member of our group said, "Well strangers, we have been a long time on the way to California, and this is a poor place to stop, we are going on!" After this talk most of the rest joined in with him, and we bade them good speed and started on. Later we learned that among their number were several gamblers and it was said that they had to leave California.

Soon we saw Indian signs, and this time it was the Apaches. Father said he would rather encounter a dozen Commanches than one Apache.

We were on a broad, open country, or valley one very hot day, with no wind, when we--my sisters and I--saw a black column of smoke rise into the air. It seemed to go straight up for about fifty feet and appeared to be about as thick as one of our water buckets. We cried, "Oh mother, look, look! Someone is setting the grass on fire behind us." Mother turned and looked and replied, "Sure enough."

Turning we saw another pillar of smoke about a mile ahead of us and apparently along the way we expected to travel. Immediately the word was passed from wagon to wagon until all knew that the terrible Apaches were trying to catch us off our guard so they could do what they did so many times, before and after us, to the pioneers.

Each man looked to his gun and the extra weapons were turned over to the women. We learned later that in the year we passed through their country they were not gathered in large companies, but generally there were from two to three to eighteen in a body. However, at the time both our mothers and ourselves sat huddled in the wagons and all were afraid to speak aloud. I thought then and still believe my mother would have been a match for any Indian.

Mother was continually quoting passages from the Bible to cheer us and help us to hold to our faith. One of her favorites was, "Thou shalt not be afraid for the

terror by night, nor the arrow that flieth by day." And truly it was terror by night for they kept up an incessant yelling and screaming.

They managed to get close enough now and then to kill one of the animals but none of our people were injured. We were terribly afraid, and yet sometimes we were not afraid, for though there was constant fear and caution yet we children played as any group of children will; we quarreled, too over trifles that seemed to be magnified in our community, largely because of the continual nervous strain.

Joyous Fishing

Sometimes we would come to a small stream that had fish in it and it was a tremendous event when some of the men folks would catch a few of the larger fish. It was the talk of the camp. One day, when we had reached such a stream and guards had been stationed, father and my sister Margaret were sitting on the bank fishing and they heard a low snarl. Jumping up they saw a panther crouched and ready to spring on them. Father and my sister raced back to the camp, leaving their poles and other tackle behind them.

The panther was traced to her den and a man by the name of Mr. Posey went into the mouth of the place until he could see the gleam of the panther's eyes and he killed her with one bullet. He pulled her out and went inside and secured three little ones, and what a time we children had trying to find some way to feed them. Mr. Posey who was naturalist, tried to save the life of one of the baby cats, but it finally died. It was at this camp I had my first sight of a catfish.

Ironwood Tree

At the foot of a mountain range called "Guadalupe" there lay a beautiful valley with grass, good drinking water and trees. One variety of tree was called ironwood and it was well-named, for it was the hardest and heaviest wood I ever saw It would burn on the campfires for a long time and the coals would remain in just the shape of the wood before it was burned. The bark of the ironwood was smooth and of a pink or reddish color, and also, the wood was red. We camped there three days and sometimes we used to gather around the big community campfire and sing some of the songs about California. Many of the songs sung around that fire have been written into the histories of the state of California.

It was there that we had a wee baby brother born; it was the second child born on the way.

Starting out again, we climbed up over a mountain road which was very rough and rocky, some of the way being merely steps of ragged rock. My poor mother sat and held the new baby on a pillow out from her own body because the jolting of the wagon was so great.

Now I am old, and mother has gone, but that picture will remain with me as long as life lasts. Sister Margaret wanted to hold the baby part of the time so mother could rest, but mother was afraid she could not do it. This was about three days after the birth of the child. There is an old saying, "There is no love like a mother's love," but as the big heavy wagon jolted over the jagged rocks of the trail, and she persisted in holding the newborn infant in such a way as to prevent it from receiving any of the continual series of shocks to which we were all subjected, even we children marveled at her strength, and her heroism, for it was nothing less.

But all things good or bad, have an end and so it was with that stretch of "road". One day we arrived, suddenly, at the edge of a beautiful valley, with a lovely stream flowing along through the heart of it. Our water was getting low and the men wanted to fill the barrels, so they stopped at the side of the stream and began this work, and kept at until one of the men helped himself to a drink and after that the barrels were emptied. The water was almost thick with sulphur. In the wagon wheel nuts the sulphur would settle after the water had evaporated, and in the moist valley country we could look back a long way and see two thin yellow ribbons of sulphur where we had passed over the trail.

Fire Attracts Scorpions

When we camped for the night we had built a fire, which was a rare thing, because of the Indians, we discovered that the many scorpions which seemed to thrive in that section of the country, were very much attracted by the light and warmth of the blaze. In our train were two others named Lancaster. Each could play the flute, and when campfires were allowed, we used to often play them. One night a monster came up to listen. We did not know it by that name then, and we thought it was very pretty. Not one of us was willing to pick it up however.

Sometimes, in the early evening when we had made an afternoon camp, and the brothers would play, now and then an Indian would stick his head around a rock or a talk tree, and it seemed as though they enjoyed the music as much as we did, although they made us feel very uncomfortable. One night we were camped on the prairie, where we could see for miles in every section, and it seemed as though we were actually alone in the world. They chose this time to play "Home, Sweet Home." I wonder if the children of today can imagine that such a scene, and that music coupled with the beautiful words, could mean to a very tired, fearful, and homesick little girl--for I was homesick, and so were we all. Pretty soon, I looked at mother sitting there holding the little one to her breast and the tears were running down her cheeks. I crept off to bed and cried myself to sleep.

Becomes Ill

On the train was a large family named Fletcher. One of them, the mother of three children, gave birth to a fourth--a baby boy, and from that time on her health began to fail. Shortly after the birth of this baby she drove a light wagon with a yoke of oxen, and often she would have to walk for miles over rough, rocky roads and down through deep canyons, and on and over new hills and mountains. The children rode in the wagon. Finally her will could no longer prevail and she became seriously ill.

Mother had my brother Seaborn drive the wagon for her. When she grew worse her children were put in another wagon, and mother asked me to go and look after her, and to keep the flies away. I did not want to but I had been taught to obey, so I put away my rag doll, and did as she asked. I had to pour out the water from a large jug for her to drink. Often she would say to me as I would try to hold her head up while she drank, "Oh, I'll remember you when I get to Califonnia; I'll do something for you when I get to California." She never reached California.

She grew to look so wild because of the fever that my brother and I were afraid of her, and one evening when we stopped, I jumped down and started for our own wagon, and met mother coming toward me. I cried, "Oh, Mama, Mrs. Fletcher is crazy, and I am afraid of her."

By this time we had reached her wagon, and as mother stepped to the side of it, Mrs Fletcher jumped out of the wagon into mother's arms. Mother called for help and the rest of the Fletchers hurried to her, and they made a pallet for her and she was laid upon it. With the weariest smile I have ever seen on a woman's face, she looked around at us and then passed away just as the sun sank behind the hills.

A coffin was made from a large meat box, and some of the men dug the grave next to where two U.S. soldiers had been buried.

Could Not Sleep

Perhaps some will wonder how a child of 9 years could know about all of these things; but I could not sleep and sister Margaret and myself got up and dressed and went to mother and saw her and Mrs Adams there. Through the darkness we could just make out where the men were digging. All of this terrible night the Indians kept up their calls and war cries and we expected to be attacked any minute. The only reason they did not, I believe (and still believe) was that God would not let them. I have always believed that All Powerful Heavenly Father's influence held them in check, for they were everywhere outside of the camp, close

up to the wagons, in the bushes.
At the break of the day Father read the Episcopal burial service. Without any breakfast and as silently as possible we started out on the trail. I cannot say how I felt, but I do know that in my heart there surged a terrible longing to get to California.

It seemed to me that some how there was a balm for pain there, and when we arrived we would be happy once more. One night I had a beautiful dream, and early the next morning I climbed out of the wagon and called to my sister, and told her "Now I know what California is like, for I dreamed about it." And I told her. I never told anyone else, nor will I, for that dream was so heartening and so precious as to seem almost sacred. Most of it came true in later years.

Before we arrived at the place called Tucson, our little baby brother became ill, and just as we reached this place in the early evening, ere the deeper shadows began to fall, he passed to his final rest.

Shortly after we had laid our little brother to rest in the old cemetery at Tucson, my brother, Seaborn, who was helping to care for the loose stock, rode into camp at noon with a poor, little scrawny looking red and white terrier in his arms and he said to me, "Here Tillie, take this little dog, and I want you to go with me and beg Daddy to let us keep him."

So we took the tiny, scared and starved thing to father, and asked if we could have him for a pet. Father said, "No, we have all the teams can haul, and I do not want any little, yelling dog along, to tell the Indians, just where we are. But brother Seaborn and myself, cried, protested and begged and promised all good behaviour for the dog, so father relented, and we named our new comrade "Fido".

Envy of Children

He was very precious to us, and also was the envy of every child in the camp. Many of them gathered their little treasures together and were willing to barter them for the loan of the dog, at so much per hour. However, we were a little selfish about this, because we had been so long without some live pet to cherish. Soon after that another family found a cat, once a family pet, but when discovered, it was half wild, and so in the camp the honors were divided.

Soon after we had discovered Fido, we reached Gila Bend, and there, one hot day, we buried Mrs Fletchers baby boy, beneath the hot sands of the desert. Shortly afterward, Mrs Shaw's little one, the first baby born after the train had started on the way to California, died and we laid him away at the top of a sandy knoll. This was the fourth death on the journey.

Indian Screeches

As we were traveling along one bright moonlight night, trying to reach the village of the Pimo Indians in Arizona, off to the left of the train we heard theloud screeches of Indians. It seemed to us that the redmen had a different kindof yell, scream, or whoop for every occasion. This particular series of loud and raucus cries had that certain sort of pitch which seemed to freeze the blood of the listeners, and I was included.
We had endured tremendous hardships, had fights with Indians, and a hundred other things, that 9-year-old girls of today will never experience, and it seems as though all of that would have hardened me to a certain extent. As a matter of fact I was more nervous than ever, so was mother, and father was irritable because of the continuous strain.
Mr Lancaster, who, as I have said, was both a bachelor, and highly excitable, began to cry out, "Corral! Corral! Corral! The Indians are upon us again!" But, for some reason, the more experienced drivers had stopped their teams, and remained as they were when the awful noises began.

Meet Indians

Soon off to our left, we saw a number of Indians on horseback riding up to our wagons. They talked to the foreman, with other men of the train standing by, after which the Indians rode on in the same direction we were traveling. We traveling. We children were told that they were a band of Pimos who had been out on a raid against the Apaches; that they had been successful in the fight against their enemies, and had brought back two squaw prisoners, for the Pimo squaws to put to death.

After midnight, we reached the Pimo village and camped on a small hill nearby, where we could look down upon them. The next day the Pimo chief, with some of his braves, invited the women of our train to come into their village and see their squaws burn the two women captives at the stake. Of course none of the women went, but there were two or three old time trekkers in our train who were used to such things and they went down and tried to persuade the Pimos to halt the terrible work. Their efforts were of no avail, and while all these men waited on the little hill, with our men looking very stern and sad, women crying, and we children wide-eyed with a horror we could hardly understand and a fear we could not analyze, the two women were tied to two stakes as large as fence posts, and the Pimo women piled small pieces of wood and brush around them.

Smiled at Death

Just before the two piles were set afire, they were lashed with rawhide by the Pimo women and the children threw rocks at them, but they stood up straight and smiled! Then they were were beaten across the mouth with wooden whips, and some of their hair was pulled out. The Pimo men sat nearby and took no part in this affair. They seemed to be quite interested, and a little amused, also proud of the manner in which their women were upholding the traditions of the tribe. Just as the fires were started, the two captives looked at each other and said something in their own language--just a few words--and soon the flames and smoke were rising up to suffocate and burn.

It was a "slow fire," one of the kind that burned the body slowly so the agony could be prolonged. After a while the stakes fell, and the lifeless bodies dropped into the live coals. After that came the chant of victory, and a sing-song story of the great deeds of the tribe.

Naturally, I did not see all of this, but the men who were close to the stakes told the story in detail when they returned. One of them said, "We should have stopped this terrible thing." But one of the oldtimers said, "We are far outnumbered and these people are friendly to the whites."

"You Kill; We Kill"

The chief came down and in a general discussion he pointed to one of the girls in our camp and said, "Apaches, get your girl, they do same but worse. You think man do wrong you hang him on tree; Apaches do us wrong, we burn. You kill, we kill; both very good."

As I remember it, some of our men tried to answer him, but one of them said later, "The way that Injun put it, the answer was hard to get at."

We stayed in this camp and while we were there, for the first time we ran into a humorous situation, which gave us all a real laugh, and this was good for us, for it has always been my opinion that if we really have something to laugh about and then obey the natural impulse, we will bot be unhappy for long.

One might imagine it would be hard to forget the thought of two women, even though they were Indians, being burned at the stake, but many things were forgotten in that long trek over the mountains, the deserts and valleys, with all of the hardships entailed on the journey. After we had been a few days at the Pimo Indian camp we learned the Indian women were inclined to be very friendly to us. They had many things to trade that we desired to have, but our own trading stock was very meagre. We girls tried to get acquainted with the little Indian girls but they were very shy.

However, one morning a little girl called, "Singing Roses" who was quite attractive, came to our camp and we struck up an acquaintance. She had a necklace and she tried to tell us that she would like to trade it for anything of value we had. I had a great desire to obtain that necklace, but I had nothing to offer for it.

Trades Rag Doll

Finally she pointed to my rag doll, which I was holding, and which I called Betsy Jane, and by signs intimated that she would like to have it. So, after a little quick consideration, the deal was made. She was very proud of her bargain, and so was I, until that evening when I crawled into the big wagon and found the little bed where Betsy Jane had reposed at night time throughout the journey, and then I knew in my heart, I had made a terrible mistake.

I climbed out of the wagon and wandered around the camp, feeling as though my heart would break. Finally I arrived at the wagon owned by a man called "Black John." He had been given that title because he was darker than any of the Indians, largely due to his being tanned by the sun. He was the biggest man I have ever known, and his heart was big, too.

Betsy Ann Returns

He heard me sobbing, and coming to where I was, he put his hand under my chin and gently asked what the trouble was. I told him how much I had loved my little doll and what had happened. After a little comforting conversation, he too my newly acquired beads, and went over to the Indian camp. In about twenty minutes he returned with Betsy Ann, and he still had the beads. How I hugged and kissed that little pal which had been with me, and which I had mothered throughout the journey. He also gave me the beads. I learned later that he had given the little girl a silver ring for the beads, and she was quite contented to make the exchange. Long afterwards, When Black John was an old man, he told me that the beads had been made from the skull of an unfortunate victim of the Pimo tribe. Had he told me at the time I think I would have nearly died.

The Pimo squaws also were anxious to trade and would bring fancy baskets and beads which they had made, to our camp. One day three squaws came with some rather fine baskets, and a Mrs. Shaw, who was short and of slight built, wanted one very much, but she did not have any money, so finally she told one of the squaws she would trade if she could find anything acceptable.

Trades Chemise

So she went back to her wagon and began to search until she found a small white chemise, and she showed it to the Indian woman. This garment was trimmed with tatting and had a pretty design on it, and the squaw was rather attracted by it. She talked the matter over with her friends, and finally agreed to make the trade. Then the fun began. Those Indian women wore nothing on their bodies except an apron made by taking willow bark and weaving it, similar to cloth, but the strips of willow bark would be about an inch wide. Loops were made at the top, so another strip of bark could be run into them, and that strip was tied around the waist. These aprons reached to the knees. Sometimes a squaw would have one for the back as well as the front.

When the proud squaw tried to put on her fine white chemise she got into trouble. It was made for a slight woman and this squaw weighed about two hundred or more pounds. Her friends had a great curiosity concerning this new garment, and they tried to assist her. Some good advice was given and everyone offered encouragement. She stuck her head into it, and it would not go over her shoulders. She gave up this attempt and taking it off she started to climb into it feet first.

Hold Sides Laughing

Her squaw friends had stopped trying to help her and were sitting on the ground, holding their sides and laughing. Most of the women of the camp had

gathered around, and they, too, were laughing, but the squaw was in deadly earnest and would not give up. Apparently she figured she had made a bad bargain but felt she was going to see it through. Little by little she worked herself into the thing, and every time she gained an inch we gave a shout of encouragement. Finally she was incased in the garment, and all of us congratulated her, as she stood there, very proud indeed.

Her friends came and praised her for getting such a bargain, and she smiled happily, until as they prepared to return to their camp, she stooped to pick up her remaining baskets and head work. When she bent over, this was too much for the chemise and it ripped clear down the back with a sound like the crack of a small rifle. She gave a little grunt, and struck out for home as fast as she could waddle. We never saw her again.

Wear Breach Cloth

The Pimo men wore only a breach cloth--that is a strip of cloth about two yards in length, and about four inches wide. This cloth was passed between the legs of the Indians and tied around the waist, with one end left loose to stream out behind them. They wore beads in their noses and ears, and around their arms. The more beads they could adorn themselves with the more attractive they thought they were.

Not long after we left this camp Black John was the means of saving us from an unknown but probably a terrible destiny, when he agreed to fight an enemy Indian belonging to a group that, apparently, had been on our trail for many weeks. It should be remembered that we were still in the heart of the Apache country.

As we journed on we came to the ruins of a fort, where U.S. soldiers had been stationed at one time, but it had been abandoned and fallen into ruins. At that place there was evidence that there had been a fight between the Indians and the soldiers. My sister and I went for a little walk about 100 yards from the camp, and as we strolled along, I felt something hard at my feet and I reached down and picked it up. After I had removed the dirt and outer crust that had formed I discovered I was holding a human skull. I dropped it very quickly indeed, but a little later gathered sufficient nerve to again pick it up and holding it as far from me as possible, I hurried to father, who after an examination, said it was the skull of an Indian.

However, to make sure, he took it to M. Posey, the naturalist, who said that undoubtedly it was an Indian skull. A bullet was imbedded in the back of the skull and new bone had grown around it, showing that the Indian had lived for a number of years after being shot. Mr. Posey asked for this grisly trophy, and I gave it to him. Many years later he gave the skull to a museum in Los Angeles. This was after I had grown to be a young woman and had been married.

Dog Barks Warning

When we traveled down the Gila river, father and mother slept under the wagon. One night, Fido, the stray dog we had picked up, and which father did not like, began to bark and run around their bed. Time after time father would try to drive him away, but it was no use; he would not stop. Finally at day-break after he had kept us awake all night he seemed to be satisfied and lay down to take a snooze. Father said when he got up the next morning that he would have to give the dog away or kill it. But a few minutes later one of the scouts in the camp discovered the trail of rattlesnakes running in a circle around the bed on the ground. Also there were tracks of Fido who had made a gallant fight under the odds. The men tracked the snakes into the bushes and they were killed.

After that father said, "Now, children, we will keep Fido as long as he lives and we will always divide our food and water with him, too." Poor old Fido lived until he was blind, deaf and toothless, but he was our good pal just the same as in the old days.

Shortly after this several of the young folks were out walking around and had wandered quite a distance from the camp. One of the mothers was worried and she went to "Black John," who, as I have said was one of the largest men in the camp, and had lived most of his life on the plains.

He was one of the most eccentric characters I have known, also one of the best hearted, and he knew no fear. He said he would go out and look for the youngsters, and he started immediately.

I heard the complete story later, from some of the girls who located the children, but a huge Indian had also spotted them and was working up towards them so as to get between them and the camp. Black John worked in behind him and followed him. At one place he was able to stand up, and, looking down through a ravine he caught sight of a body of Indians, perhaps sixty in number, who, apparently, were waiting for nightfall to attack our camp. Immediately Black John knew it was his task to silence the single Indian for two reasons, the first to keep him from warning the Indian party, and the second to escort the children as quickly as possible to the camp and give the warning. He managed to get within seven or eight feet of the Indian before the latter became suspicious, and as he turned around to look, John threw a rock at him, and it caught him in the pit of the stomach; this was followed by a leap on the part of Black John and he got one hand on the Indians throat.

The Indian was as large, if not the larger of the two, and he tried to tear himself loose from the throat hold. While the children looked on in horror, they rolled around the ground, biting and kicking, with the Indian striving to get at his knife, and Black John trying to prevent him. At last the Indian struck Black John in the abdomen with his knee and it hurt him terribly and he almost let go of his throat hold.But he managed to hang on, and then the redskin got a hold on the white man's neck, and when this happened one of the boys who had been in the party, picked up a rock and tried to get to the Indian, but Black John shook his head fiercely and suddenly rose to his feet, and in some remarkable way, which of the youngsters could understand released his throat hold and secured a peculiar hold on the Indian's body, and before he could cry out his back was broken.

Then Black John took his woolen kerchief and gagged him, after which he urged the boys and girls who had been too scared to move, back to camp. We had to crawl most of the way, and Black John dragged the Indian over the rocks and sand behind him until we had arrived at the first of the wagons.

Then there was pandemonium. While some of the men who were used to such things urged silence, the women would cry out. The band of Indians were about half a mile away, and apparently paid no attention to the cries, not knowing the cause. Later they were excited enough for the Indian died, and it was discovered that he was the oldest son of a noted chieftian. The wagons were hastily placed in a fighting position with the women and children in the center, also the animals. We learned afterwards that Black John and the Indian had fought for more than twenty minutes, although it seemed to be only as many seconds to the boys and girls who witnessed the terrible contest.

Later in the day, when the Indian was dying, BlackJohn took care of him and gave him water to drink; also he talked to him in his own language, but afterwards he would never tell what had been said. That night the Indians, who had in some way learned of the fate of their leader came down under a flag of truce and swore they would go away and not bother us if they could have the body of their famed comrade. We of course were glad to do this, although most of the men professed to have little confidence in the pledge of an Indian.

"Christ smiled and let His scepter gently rest on hill and plain;
Some died before they reached here--they did not pass in vain.
They pioneered a pathway for the rest of those who trod
The mountains and the deserts to the favored land of God."

One bright November day there was unusual bustle around our camp, with the men being in exceptionally good spirits and the women gathering in groups and smiling and laughing in a way they had not done in the nine months journey across a vast stretch of territory to get to California.

Mother was smiling too, and the worn look seemed to have partially faded from her face. We asked her if there was any good news, and another woman stepped up and kissed me, crying joyfully, "Sometime this afternoon we will reach the Colorado and then at last we will be in California."

It was certainly a time of jubilation, for the journey had been a terrible strain on all of us, and four of our people had died on the journey. We had lived in cramped quarters in our wagons, or under them, and were not allowed to go far from the camp except on special occasions. Some how it seemed that all of us children felt that our troubles would be over when we crossed the colorado river and stood on California soil.

Ferried Over River

And, sure enough, along in the afternoon, the wagons all came to the edge of the Colorado river and we were ferried across, but we were not at our journey's end. The train disbanded, some going to different parts of the state, but father said, "It is best for us to camp here on the river where there is water and grass for a month before trying to cross the desert."

Our guide had immediately left, taking the back trail. We had been hauling two children and another member of our party had been hauling a man and woman, the mother and father of the children who were traveling with us. Their train had had a big fight with the Indians and all of their stock had been taken, but in some way the four in this particular family had managed to escape. They were picked up by our train and told of their terrible hardships. Their name was Harris. We all camped near the Colorado river for six weeks, until the last of December when we started on the last lap of our long journey. We were about two two weeks crossing the desert, but, as it was in December and January, we did not suffer from heat or thirst as when crossing the staked plains.

Arrive Near Campo

We came into California near what was called Campo, I believe, and how well I remember with what delight we hailed the sight of the first habitation and saw smoke curling up from a chimney. Though it was a very humble one-room house and only a bachelor lived there, it was home and shelter for a white man.

Nowadays, it seems to an old-fashioned woman like me that many of our people take a delight in getting away from home, but after we had been without a home for almost a year, the word home came to have a wonerful meaning for us.

At this time I would like to speak of my mother's sweet Christian character. Along that terrible hot and cold journey, I never remember having heard her speak a cross word to anyone, but she was always ready to help anyone in sickness or trouble of any kind, and there surely were many trying things and many sad sights.

I remember one instance in particular. It was when we stood on the banks of the Colorado river one cold morning watching the stock herders swimming the cattle over the river. It was all the herders could do to keep the cattle together and make them swim across to the California side, for it was a very swift flowing river and many of the animals became panic stricken. Some, drifing down stream, were caught in the eddies and were drowned.

The women and children stood on the banks and watched the efforts of the herdsmen to keep themselves and their horses from drowning and at the same time try to drive the cattle across. As the dead animals would float swiftly past us, one poor little woman, a Mrs Gill, stood holding her baby boy in her arms, and with tears in her eyes and a sob in her throat said, "Oh, I wish that my baby and I were floating down like those cattle are!"

My mother was near her, and hearing this lament, she spoke words of Christian help to her and tried to cheer her up. We children were sorry for her because we knew she had an unkind husband, and it made everyone sad to see how lonely she was.

And how well I remember the way mother taught us the Bible. On the hot summer evenings she would sit in her chair out under the stars, and we four children, Seaborn, Margaret, Mollie and I, would gather around her knees, and she would start with the oldest of us and tell a Bible story, and finish with myself, by telling me a story to fit my age. Then she would point to the heavens and talk about the universe, and how God made and controlled the world and all of the stars. I remember that at that time I wondered if heaven would be as bright as the glorious southern moon.

Makes All Clothes

When it is considered that she carded, spun and wove all the clothes we wore, even to the cloth for father's clothes, both woolen and cotton cloth; also that she almost always worked until midnight or later, besides visiting the sick in the camp, unless we were ill, it can be understood why I say that I had one of the most wonderful, wisest and best mothers that God ever gave to children.

At the end of our desert trip we arrived in San Diego. When I say San Diego, I do not mean the present place of the same name. For there was not enough of the present city to have a name.

The San Diego we first saw was a small Mexican town with a plaza and adobe houses, facing the plaza on three sides. On the fourth side were the few business houses, also constructed of the same material. Near the plaza were four palm trees, and to the children they were a great curiosity, as they were the first we had seen. They had been planted by the priests, and, in 1876, during the centennial exposition in Chicago, two of the trees were loaded on to wagons and sent to Chicago. They were about one hundred years old at the time, and had been planted there about the same time the San Gabriel Mission was erected. In San Diego they told us that San Gabriel was destined to be the metropolis of Southern California, and very little was said about Los Angeles.

"Out here we find a friendship more precious than mere gold:
Sincerity's a habit--men's hearts are never cold.
Good fellowship is common, it's wonderful to feel
That life to us is beauty, that peace to us is real."

When after our nine months' trip across the plains and deserts, the mountains and the valleys, with our many terrible experiences, we arrived in San Diego, we did not see all that we had hoped for and which we had dreamed about, but were supremely contented for the time being.

Later we learned that no one can enter into a spiritual or material state of happiness unless he or she has strived to make that happiness a living and real entity. It was up to us as pioneers to help make all of our dreams come true. Of course we children did not have this philosophy at the time, but we worked up to it. I know that as I look back at those old days just after the Civil War, when we first arrived in the Golden State, we expected to be happy and that all of our troubles were over.

The trouble with us was that we "looked" for happiness instead of creating it. I, of course, an speaking of the adults. Myself and my sisters did not know whatsupreme contentment was; no one had ever told us just what that meant, but we were content. We had discovered another world. We had discovered the great Pacific. It didn't matter to us that Balboa and the priests, along with many others had been there first.

We not only saw this wonderful new country, but we felt it. The country was new and glorious in ourselves. We had a feeling of regard for the few residents who had come before us, we loved the new kind of sunshine and the salt air.

Were Really Happy

Yes, we were happy. We had a smile for everyone, and we sang the songs of the west, with music in our throats and an effervescent joy in our hearts. We certainly were happy, but we did not know it. Had we suddenly turned around and looked to see if happiness was on our trail, we would have been disappointed. I was alittle girl then, and now, from the distance of many years, I can look back and understand. There was glory in the moonlight, a seemingly glad and smiling welcome on the face of every flower. The warm sands that blew either to or from the sea seemed to have a special caress for us.

One day my sister, Margaret, said, "I wonder why all of the people are so kind?" I did not know and, of course, I could not answer. Now I know that they were kind and considerately because we tried to be kind to them. I understand now that no one can resist kindness and a cooperative spirit. Of course there were hard times. Many a night we went to bed without supper, and for the moment we felt rather sad, but when the glad sun came to greet us the next morning, the past was forgotten and the future seemed to be a part of the general scheme of sublimity, which by its very nature helped sustain the faith and trust which build character and developed to a degree that sureness of purpose that brought us through all trouble and pain to our share of spiritual and material satisfaction.

Liked San Diego

We came to like the little town, if it could be called a town, of San Diego, near the old Spanish mission buildings. There was a white man who had a store there by the name of Robinson. My father bought supplies from him such as groceries and shoes for all the family. This Mr. Robinson told us of a new town that a man by the name of Horton had started. So father drove all of us over to see it, figuring that possibly he would establish a home there. In this "new town," which was principally sage brush and sand, there were three small dwelling places about 12x14 feet in size and one store about the same size as the houses. Also there was a saloon and a hotel about 20x30 feet in size. The walls were 14 feet high with little square windows under the eaves and a door and window in the front.

The foundation was laid for another hotel and my sister and I would run around on the handmade brick to play. This hotel was not finished until 1870, and it was the first building of any size in what was and is called "New Town." When it was completed it was called the Horton House, for the owner and booster of San Diego was M. Horton. He had bought up a tract of land from the government and had advertised the section in the east, telling what a fine country California was, telling of the beauty of San Diego bay, and the wonderful climate.

Father of San Diego

This was during the fall of 1868. Mr. Horton, was called "The father of San Diego" for years. He died in Los Angeles about 1889.

Shortly after our arrival in San Diego, father took us out about twelve miles from San Diego into the Poway valley. There he learned that the land was unsurveyed, and all he could do was to take a "squatter's claim." Father did not like this and decided to look for something better. He drove the team into another part of the valley which was three miles wide with a pretty stream of water running through it. The next day he began to cut brush, posts and poles to make a "brush house" and he also set up our tent. We removed our things from the wagon, unpacked and prepared to camp for the summer.

One man, a Mr. Ormsby, was fortunate enough to possess a cow, and he with his family had put in a garden. This was the first garden we had seen since we had left southeast Texas. We girls liked to get close to this garden as possible it looked so "homey" and inviting, and eventually asked for the privilege of helping to cultivate it.

We had more genuine pleasure in doing this than most modern girls have in

going for an auto ride, to a movie, or the beach. How carefully we tended each separate plant, and how we enjoyed seeing the garden develop. The pretty little creek was dammed up so there was plentitude of water for the garden but it had to be carried. We had our reward later when we received some of the products of the garden. And those vegetables were so precious to us as a basket of diamonds would be today.

" The clouds curl around the mountains, the palms and other trees
Send forth a royal welcome to ev'ry dancing breeze;
The winding paths lead downward--down to the singing sea--
The golden western sunset is beckoning to me."

In many ways the people who came to California in the 60's were different from the people we had known in the southeast Texas country. There seemed to be a spirit of comraderie which could not be understood. The few people were always willing to help us solve our problems, and we reciprocated; it used to be the spirit of the country.

Even in those days everyone was praising the western state. There seemed to be something in the air which helped to nourish and develop a true spirit of optimism. Possibly this was true of all of the others countries when the pioneers came but this was our only experience and we felt it so deeply that my memory still lingers.

Were Neighbors

Living about one and a half miles from us was a family named Anderson who had one hundred acres of land. The wife had been married before and she had three grown sons and three grown daughters by the name of Kerran. About one mile from them was another man and his wife with a small child, and their name was Hoskins, and aside from the few people in San Diego, these folks and ours made up the total population for a distance of forty miles in every direction.

The Kerran sons owned hundreds of cattle and horses, but they did not cultivate any of their land. They didn't even have a garden and lived as the Mexicans did. They had a good sized adobe house, and lived on tortillas, dried beans and had beef or "jerky" as it was called. When they killed a beef they would eat all they could of the fresh meat, which was hung up someplace in the shade. The rest of the meat was cut off the bones like the Mexicans in long strips, which they would throw over lines in the hot sun to dry, and after it became dry and hard it was put away for future use. When these people were asked why they did not milk some of the cows, they seemed to be much amused, and some were inclined to be rather peevish about what they considered a silly question.

Summer in Valley

We spent the summer in the pretty little Poway valley waiting for the government to send out men to survey the land, so people could start locating claims. During this summer two more families moved into the valley. There were no churches or schools outside of the village of San Diego.

During all this time we had not seen a fruit tree or grape vine, or leafy vegetables except those raised by the bachelors who were holding land for Mr. Robinson. In the summer of 1870 fruit peddlers would come from San Bernardino and now and then would come as far as our place. However, the prices were so high that Mother bought very little.

From April, 1869 to December 1871, there was not enough rain to lay the dust. Horses and cattle died in large numbers, and during the summer of 1871 stockherders drove cattle and horses over the bluffs into the ocean in order to keep what food there was for the others.

Take Squatter's Claim

In the fall of 1869 father had seen a small valley about two miles from the Poway valley, and he decided to move there and take a squatter's claim. At this

time there were no houses anywhere with the exception of the Kerran adobe house, and some old adobe houses and ruins of the Spanish missions which were about ten miles away. Those old houses and the old mines nearby belonged to the Escondido grant owners who lived in Los Angeles. One of the families that had moved in was named Bickmore and they had eight children. Mr. Bickmore had been a soldier in the Mexican war, and had fought in a battle about half a mile from the place father had chosen for our home. He showed us the old fortificstions the Americans had thrown up. The Americans were on top of a rocky hill, without food, and expected reinforcements, but the Mexicans had cut off their supplies, and Mr. Bickmore said that his regiment had killed and eaten a mule, and so thereafter that elevationwas called "Mule's Hill."

We asked him how he liked mule meat and he said it was "pretty good and tough," and added that the mule was a general favorite with the regiment and for that reason some of the men refused to touch the meat.

After the mule had been consumed, a soldier who was quite a talker had arisen and delivered a touching eulogy to the departed, and this oration was so effective that it brought tears to the eyes of several, while others had to leave suddenly and disgorge.

Giant Rock Near Home

Near our new home was a large rock ten feet high and almost square. The side facing east was as smooth as if it had been made so by some process. The rock was of granite formation, and the entire face of it was painted with figures of different shapes. Some of the figures resembled tadpoles, and others appeared to be triangles. My father said most of the emblems were similar to those used in the Masonic lodge, and he believed the parties who had done the painting were Masons. My father was a Mason.

This rock was painted with a red or pink color and faced east. Not far from it, about one-fourth of a mile away was a smooth, oblong hill without any large rocks on it, and it was said to be the ruins of an ancient village, where the people had once lived who had painted the rock. Father thought it was their burial ground and the rock might have been painted as a record of the ancient life of those who had lived there centuries ago, though hundreds of years had passed, the paint was still bright and the figures clear and distinct.

One Room Home

Mr Bickmore built our new home, a one-room house, and he also made some bedsteads, upon which we placed our feather beds. We arranged our few belongings in the new "home" and slept in beds in a house for the first time in a year and a half. We did not have a stove, but cooked out of doors all of the time, until 1871. Mother would make "salt-rising or sour-yeast", bread.

On February 22, 1870, an old prospector went into the mountains of San Diego county, and finally, after a lifetime of effort, stuck his pick into a ledge of quartz and opened up a tremendously rich gold vein. At once everything else was forgotten and men became drunk with dreams of gold and fortune.

"We've found it is a country of sunshine, joy and flowers
Where each new day is glowing with blessed, happy hours.
Divinity is hidden within the bubbling rills;
Salt winds sweep clean, in passing, the peaks of ancient hills."

When I was a little girl and had just arrived in California I often used to wonder if all the pioneers felt the same as I did. There were so many things to be glad about. So many likeable people to be liked. So many new events that came with the morning sun and which I was glad to greet. There was an air of newness about everything everywhere.

I remember hearing some of the grown-ups say the country was too dry and too dusty; that there were no luxuries, that some of the Mexicans were undesirable and a lot of other things, but I did not care, and therein lies a secret.
When my father and mother and we children started on the long trail to the Golden State, I used to do a great deal of thinking, especially when we were surrounded by Indians.

To Like California

Before we had reached the Colorado river I had definitely made up my mind that I was going to like California and all of the people, and as a result of this determination, I discovered that California liked me, that it was good to me, and so were the few people who were here when we arrived. Now, when I am old, and somewhat feeble, I can look back and understand how valuable was the philosophy which I had generated and put into effect. (Although I could not have defined philosophy to save my life.)

In the 25 years I have lived in Bell I have tried to maintain the same attitude and it always works.

In our home near San Diego in 1869 there were rabbits by the million, it seemed, and just as man quail. We did not have a gun to kill rabbits so father made a trap to catch the quail, and we trained Fido to chase the rabbits into a hole in the rocks. Then we would take a string and put a large fish hook on the end of it, and "catch rabbits." Now and then a curious rattlesnake would nibble at the hook and we would pull them out too. When we discovered what kind of a "fish" we had landed, we scurried away very quickly indeed.

Traded Oxen

About this time, father did something which seemed to be a real tragedy to my sister Margaret and myself. He traded off dear old Lamb and Stout, the oxen that had pulled us from southeast Texas to California, for horses that were broken to harness. Settlers began to arrive in San Diego and father cut oak cordwood and hauled it there.

When the old miner I have spoken of before discovered gold in the mountains of San Diego county he had to send his samples to San Francisco to be assayed, and in those days travel was very slow. Allmail and passengers coming south or going north, either went by boat, which took about five or six days by four-horse stage route, which was even slower, so it took a month or more before the news reached San Diego that gold had been discovered in the mountains 75 miles from the coast.
In 1869 settlers began to move into a part of the county north of where we were located and tried to raise a few vegetables and some grain. Two or three stock raisers had settled in the same vicinity. They were bitterly opposed to the emigrants moving in and endeavored in every possible way to hinder and harass the settlers.
In some cases they hired Mexicans to kill some of the men who had tried to settle in that section. This part of the county was called "Ballina," which means in Spanish "Whale Mountain," so named because of a large mountain which some people thought resembled a whale. It was not long before there were 25 homes in that part of San Diego called New Town, and the residents were very proud of their city. About this time we met the first doctor who had located in the town and hung out his "Shingle." His name was Dr. Royal and he had a wife and one small baby boy. He had been an army surgeon in the Civil War, and had come to this place to take up the practice of medicine and surgery. As a child, I spent a week with his wife in their little home.

News began to go in every direction that gold had been discovered in our county. There was a great deal of excitement; men left their farms and stockmen left their herds, believing they would gain a fortune in a few months. Some of them were successful, but most of those who went returned the poorer for their journey.

There was no wharf or pier at New Town where the passengers could be landed, so the steamers stopped at a small wharf out in the tide flats of the Old San Diego, and people were taken off the ships in small boats and rowed to the shore.

Carried by Indians

At this time two young school teachers about 25 years of age were sent by the government from the east to teach school in New Town. They were put off from the ship and rowed to the shore, but after the boats had come as far in as possible, there was still quite a span of water between them and the mainland. Four bare backed Indians were hired to wade out to the side of the row boats and carry the passengers to the shore. The officer told the ladies that the Indians would carry them to the bank, but one of the teachers refused, saying "What! put my arms around a black, naked Indian? No, I'll go back first!" But the other teacher was more brave and after talking with her friend, persuaded her to do as the officers advised. One of the ladies who can vouch for this is Mrs. Sherman. She lived in the old Spanish town and taught English to the Mexican and to the few white ones. When I knew her she was the wife of Captain Sherman, and in the fall of 1877 he was sent to Washington as the representative of San Diego county.

About 1872, the first wharf was built, and that was really the beginning of the steady growth of what is now called San Diego, although we called it "New Town" for years. Because of this growth and the gold rush there was a great demand for lumber, but lumber was very high priced and scarce, as it was brought down by water from Northern California. Later some lumber was obtained from the mountains where the gold mines were. The first mining town was named "Julian," in honor of the man who had first discovered gold. However, the local lumber was rather crude and as the miners were great spenders, they preferred to buy the northern product.

In the next chapter of this history I will tell of the "gold stampede."

Although I have lived in Bell at least twenty-six years, coming when there was practically no stores or residences. I still receive letters from San Diego, and some of my old girlhood friends tell me they still have a vivid memory of the famous gold rush to the mountains back of San Diego.

As a matter of fact there are dozens of families of descendents of families living within seven or eight miles of Huntington Park who were in that mad scramble to get to the place "where one could pick up nuggets off the ground." All freight for the new Eldorado town of Julian was brought to San Diego by steamer and then hauled seventy-five miles over very rough and rocky roads to the destination.

Uses Wheelbarrow

All modes of travel were used by the people to get to the end of this "rainbow." One of the interesting sights was a man about fifty years of age, and who weighed about 125 pounds, pushing a wheelbarrow up the rough trail, with his wife and baby as the passengers. Every time he would stop for a brief rest, the woman, who weighed one hundred and seventy-five pounds, would climb off the wheelbarrow, lay the baby down, and go after "her old man" with a small club which she kept handy.

This was a rather pathetic sight, until one day the little man finally summoned up enough nerve to defend himself, and it really was a battle royal. Most of those on the trail who had stopped to witness that theyconsidered an interesting event, figured it was a "draw," but it was said that afterward the wife did not molest him. She had a black eye and the poor little man's nose was pushed to one side. However, this family, called "the Wilkins Family," did very well when they reached their goal, acquiring a claim and securing enough of the precious metal, in one way and another, to make them independent.

Flock to Scene

A great many single women could be seen trudging up the trail, with all of their belongings tied up in a small bundle. Some of them were very respectable,

one being a school teacher, and when she arrived at the gold fields she had sense enough to know that a good cook could make more than the average miner in a day. She made about two hundred and fifty dollars a month, and finally married a bachelor who had made good on his claim.

At this time the first superintendent had been appointed for the San Diego county schools. His name was Mr. McLaugherty and he had a wife and three children.

Father applied for and received a certificate to teach. After he had received the certificate, father said, "those people up in the new town of Julian will want a school teacher" and so he and my brother were among the travelers to that place.

One of the most peculiar incidents we noted while we watched the people pass by our house on the trail, was the sight of a little bald-headed man wearing glasses, and dressed in what is called a mother hubbard dress. At first we thought he was some kind of a preacher, but when he stopped not far from our place he came and asked for a drink of water.

Stole His Clothes

When he had drank, he told his story. It seemed that his wife had taken a liking to one of the gold seekers, and had departed with him. The goldseeker stole all of the husband's clothes before they departed in the night. But somehow the wife left this mother hubbard dress and it was up to him to wear that or nothing. His wife must have been a large woman for the dress he wore dragged on the ground. We learned later when he reached Julian he found his wife deserted and forlorn, and took her back. The descendants of the couple are well known in San Diego county.

One evening just before sunset, we saw a man and woman stop by the roadside, and then the woman who was very slight, came to the house and asked if she and her husband could stay there all night. She said she was sick, and they did not have anything with which to make a bed. They had walked from the village of San Diego that day and were very tired so mother took them in, and gave them a meal composed of cotton tail rabbit, biscuits prepared in the iron Dutch oven which we had brought with us from Texas, and plenty of hot grain coffee.

Stay Over Night

Although the little woman was feeling quite ill when she reached us, the warm food, rest, and my mother's kindness and sympathy seemed to revive her wonderfully. The next morning, we gave them bread and coffee for breakfast (it was all we had) and once more they started on their tedious journey to the mountains, toward Julian, toward gold, toward what they hoped and dreamed would be wealth and happiness. The husband secured wealth, but he lost his wife.

Day and night, from early summer in 1870 until the next spring, the road was lined with heavy teams, foot travelers, some in buggies, some on horseback others in two-wheeled carts, while there were many who were trudging along with wheelbarrows. All talked as though they expected to make a fortune. My father taught the first school, from the fall of 1870 to March, 1871, when he was taken very seriously ill amd had to return home.

Moves to Ballina

When he began to recover he could not use his right arm and he remained under the care of Dr. Royal until he was completely cured. Then father decided to move to Balina, as he had an opportunity to get a school there. He sold his little house to a man who wanted to take the "squatters" claim, for, during all this time no one had come to survey the government land, and the big stock men were doing all they could to discourage settlers, and the grant owners were ordering settlers off.

On June 14, 1871, my thirteenth birthday, we moved to Ballina, and father applied for the school. In September the trustees had been elected and they built a brush arbor to be used as a school house. This consisted of four posts set

in the ground about fourteen feet apart. Poles were nailed to each corner post overhead and a number of cross poles fastened to these; then sycamore branches were cut and carefully arranged on the overhead poles so as to form a roof. There were no walls, door, or windows to this first humble little schoolhouse, but at least there was shade and plenty of fresh, pure mountain air. For benches we had oak logs, each about six feet long, these logs were split in half and the split side was smoothed off with a drawing knife. Legs were put on the rough side of the logs.

There were no backs to the benches and no desks for the pupils. Father had a dry goods box which he stood on end and used for a desk. Those who were taught writing had to set at father's "desk" during the writing lesson period.

"The graciousness of heaven flows through the silent night;
The people feel its glory, till consciousness takes flight.
God's wrath is ever absent, His love is so design
To urge us ever onward, creating ties that bind."

Father taught in the little brush arbor at Ballena until the rainy season came and then the trustees procured the use of a room in an old deserted adobe house where goats were kept at night in an adjoining room. I often compare the present school days with those of 1871-72-73. Father taught two terms in that school, then he began farming.

At this time he wrote to his old chum Mr. Clemens (Mark Twain) telling of the difficulties in the way of children securing an education, and Mr. Clemens in answering the letter said, "Well, old friend, there you go poking your mind into trouble, when there is really none. You have put yourself in jail with your thoughts to keep you company, and no one can release you but yourself. Those children you are worrying about are receiving a really valuable education by assuming a positive attitude, while you are doing your best to 'uneducate' yourself.

"Stick to the Farm"

"Stick to the farm and it will teach you a great deal. There is much to be learned from the soil. You may find tragedy, happiness, humor, or contentment there, just as you choose. As for me I find that life is broadening out, and I think this is because people with the expectation of finding something worth while. All people are funny, and that makes me cheerful. I should say good nature and healthy optimism, with a proper sense of humor, are among the most valuable assets you or any of us can possess. When we were pals in San Francisco I had no worries and you thought me foolish. Drop your burden and let someone else pick it up if they want to."

"But be sure to label it so no one will get cheated. Personally I am having a great time, largely because that is the kind of time I intended to have. Gather up those invaluable bits of personality you have dropped by the wayside; piece them together and put them into circulation. Above all things, release yourself. Get out of jail."

Fence All Fields

Farmers or ranchers had to fence all their grain fields from the cattle and horses roaming everywhere and often the cattle or horses would break down the fences and destroy the grain. Often father would get up in the morning and find a large herd of stock feeding in his grain field, with the grain entirely ruined. In 1873, the government sent out surveyors to survey the county, and about this time the ranchers won what they had been fighting for, and that was what was called the "No Fence Law". The government decided in favor of the farmer and against the stockmen, and after that when stock was found in the grain fields, the damages were appraised and the stockmen had to pay before he could claim his stock.
It was not long after that before the stockmen were out numbered many times

overby the ranchers, and gradually there were fruit trees and vines planted where there had previously been hundreds of thousands of cattle, sheep and horses roaming. For the first time in that part of California there were undisturbed green fields of grain, orchards, vineyards and homes surrounded by groups of trees.

Priests Built Home

When I was 12 years old, I often visited at the ranch house of the owner of the Escondido grant--Mr. Wolfskill, who, with his wife and small boy had come down to the old ranch house from Los Angeles. That old house was built by the Spanish priests and contained three bedrooms, a very large dining room and a large kitchen. A roomy basement was built on the side of a hill and was said to have been constructed as a refuge in case of an attack by Indians. Also there were out-buildings, other houses, and an interesting old mill, within which was a contrivance for crushing ore.

There were old mines on this part of the ranch and the Indians had done the mining under the direction of the priests. Also there were some olive trees, set out by the priests, and a vineyard that Mr. Wolfskill had cultivated and pruned. In August, 1872, my sister and I examined the vines and trees the priests had brought from Spain a hundred years before; they were still growing and looked healthy.

"Circuit Rider"

All this time there were no regular church services, until in 1872 the Methodist church sent out what was called a "circuit rider". He was usually a young man who had been ordained as a minister, but who had no located church, and was given this work until he could do better. He was paid a small salary by the church and boarded around wherever he might happen to be.

The circuit rider who came to our settlement once a month to preach was one of those who had crossed the plains with us after the Civil War. His name was James Gill. Everyone called him "Jim". He was a brother of one of the married men in our train.

There was a man living near us by the name of Van Casner. Mr Casner had gone to San Diego and interested the Methodist minister there in the matter of child religious education. Later in 1873 he began to hold a small Sunday school in his home. Shortly thereafter, the school board, after giving much serious consideration to the subject, decided to build a one room school house.

Financed by Miner

The building was built of rough green lumber from the Julian saw Mill and covered with shakes made by the same mill. It was partly financed by a miner who had make good at Julian. He stated that he had, had no opportunity to secure an education when a child and he wanted other children to get a square deal. This school room was about 18x30 feet, and a carpenter was hired to make desks, so at last pupils could sit at a desk to study and write. Thus by the winter of 1874 we began to feel like old-time settlers, and had become fully imbued with the California spirit.

All the time that we were living in Poway, or near it, mother and father continued teaching us the Bible, and we were not allowed to do any boisterous playing of games or climb mountains on Sunday, but were taught that the Sabbath was God's day and that it was a day for rest and to read the Bible.

My father, who had a good memory, would sing hymns and other songs on Sundays and other evenings. Father's stories of his boyhood life in England were a never ending source of delight to all of us, and as he had traveled around the world after graduating from Oxnard, his experiences had been varied and extremely interesting.

One of the most interesting events of the summer of 1872 was when old Uncle Elijah Bayes, a well-known character, took his hook and line and went out to

the rocks to fish for rabbits, and caught a rattlesnake, but that's another story.

"The splendor of the noontime reflects the glow of dawn;
Serenity of summer, with harvest coming on,
Foretells the reign of autumn, with patterns gold and green:
The harvest days are over, each soul is quite serene."

In 1872 we were a pretty contented lot of people in San Diego county despite the fact that there was a water famine. But there were so many blessings that we were bound to be happy. Of course we youngsters did not realize the seriousness of the water famine as did the adults. and then we always had that inimitable character, Elijah Bayes, to cheer us up. He said it was a good thing there wasn't much water, for if there had been a plentiful supply he would be expected to take a bath.

"Elijah," or "Lige" as the children used to call him, was a confirmed optimist about everything in the world except himself. It seemed that he was well known through all of that part of Southern California which was settled. He was called the community fixer. He used to mend fences, paint houses, do family washings, act as cook, nurse, gardener, and sage. It was his fixed belief that he could do anything just a little better than anyone else, and we thought he was a hero. He had gone through four years of the Civil War, and had been commended by General Grant for distinguished service. Mother thought he was wonderful, but father said he was the biggest l ar on earth. Almost any afternoon he could be seen perched on the rocks with his short pole and weighted line with a number of hooks attached fishing for rabbits. Generally he was successful and would average four or five each afternoon. He always gave them away to those who found it difficult tosecure fresh meat.

Hooks Rattlesnake

One day "Lige" went out to secure what he hoped would be a regular catch. Some of us young folks went with him, more to hear him sing than anything else. He had committed a great number of hymns to memory and every time he would catch a rabbit he would sing one of the old songs. This time he had caught two rabbits, nice little fellows, consequently there were two songs which we enjoyed, for he could really sing very well.

He moved to another place and lowered his line. Suddenly he gave a yank and yelled, "I've got him!" and started dancing around and pulling in the line, meanwhile bursting out with the chorus of "We're Marching to Zion."

When the victim had been hauled to the top of the rocks he discovered he had hooked a four-foot rattlesnake. The odd part about it was that he kept on singing, but started to run, and ran onto the line. He was a little short man with a rheumatic leg, but for five miles, it was afterwards said, he made better time than any race horse in the country. Finally someone stopped him, and it was discovered that the snake had succumbed during the journey.

Poor Elijah, he was very ill for several weeks and he never sang after that, although he caught many rabbits. When one of us girls asked him to sing one day on one of these trips, he shook his head and looked thoughtful. "Wimmen always liked my voice," he said reminiscently, "and they used to sort o' flock around to hear me." He smiled rather solemnly, "but I don't aim to charm any more rattlesnakes." This story went all through the south and a song was written about it. Even as recently as fifteen years ago snatches of this song have been sung in the south country.

Lived Near San Diego

When we lived in our little one-room house not far from San Diego, the nearest water to us was a spring, that, in spite of the continuous drouth, continued to flow. We had to carry all the water for domestic use from this spring in buckets, and my sister and I usually made the trip each morning.

When "wash day" came, the first of the week, we would carry our tub, clothes, bucket and soap to the spring and bucket and soap to the spring and build a fire; we would make a circle of rocks and place our big iron kettle on it above the blaze. Girls of ten to thirteen thought nothing of doing such chores; in fact we had quite a lot of fun out of it. There was always a contest to see who could do the best work, and how we would sing as we rubbed! One day a man came out from San Diego just as we were hanging up the clothes to dry and he heard us singing.

Was Noted Writer

We learned afterwards that he was a noted writer and when he returned to his home in San Francisco, he wrote a poem and called it the "Clothes Line Melody," and after it was published he sent us a copy. We still have the lines and now, more than sixty years later we wonder if he would have written the beautiful words if we had a modern washing machine. As we did not have any way to iron our clothes we would press them out smoothly, fold them, then put them under pressure for a while.

In those older days our work was simple enough and did not require a great deal of time. Mother was very careful to teach my sisters and myself how to make bread, either of sour dough or rising. She would begin Monday morning and have my sister, Margaret, make the bread and do the cooking for that week, and to me she would say, "It is your turn to make the beds, to sweep the floor and keep the room in order. I was only eleven years of age, and like other little girls will do sometimes, I was inclined to leave the corners and just go around the center with the broom. But mother would come in and look at my work; then she would call me and in her sweet, quiet way, would say, "I want you to take the broom and sweep this room."

Building Character

There was no argument, for who could contend with such a mother. One day she said, "As you sweep you are building character. If you fail to do your duty no one will be the loser except yourself." Another time, after I had swept the room, she came in and said, "Well I am going to sit down here in the middle of the room while you sweep out the corners, and do it just as well as possible." After that I never missed the corners.

One morning as my sisters and myself were on the way to the spring for water, my little sister Mollie stepped on a large rattle-snake which was coiled up on the trail ready to spring. This incident was the direct cause of a drive on the snakes by settlers and more than seven hundred were exterminated.

One of the most remarkable demonstrations I have ever seen was when the railroad came to San Diego about 1879.

"The breath of new-born dream time sweeps thru the twilight hour
And brings to us the perfume from some fair, fragrant bower.
The incense floats around us--we linger in the glade,
Communing with the roses, content and unafraid."

Until about 1880 there was no railroad south of Los Angeles and all the people in and around San Diego were continually speculating as to when the road would be built. We were having a great deal of difficulty with the old system of stages, which carried mail, freight and passengers. Of course it was a picturesque sight to see the old stage coaches come swinging along the trail, with a driver shouting and cracking his whip and with the guard sitting there with his gun ready for service.

As a rule these guards were very quiet men and had an uncanny knack of seeming to look clear through us--at least that was the way it appeared to us girls. And we say many of these coaches, for "Lige," Bayes, our washerman, jack of all trades and tried and true counsellor, used to take us to the "city" about the time the stage came in. Many grand ladies and gentlemen arrived in the coaches, some of them having been responsible for much of California's progress

in later years.

Gather to See Train

However, there was much trouble with the freight and some difficulty with the mail, and so, with the people eagerly waiting for the announcement, word was finally received that the first train would arrive in San Diego on a certainday at 10 o'clock in the forenoon. As early as 5 o'clock in the morning people commenced to gather at the small one-room stage depot to see the train pull in. There were many Mexicans who had never seen a train, also about 60 percent of the Americans had their first time to see a train outside of an illustrated magazine.

By 10 o'clock there were more than 2000 people waiting and this was considered to be the largest crowd that had ever assembled in one spot in the history of San Diego county. Cowboys passed the time by doing stunts to entertain the crowd, old miners from the hills were everywhere and there was a great deal of gambling. One man bet the train would arrive at 9:55, while the other party wagered that the train would not arrive until noon, or later. This last man won, and the prize was a gold nugget that weighed six ounces. Everyone seemed to have plenty of money, but there was nothing to buy.

Long Distance View

The crowd waited all day and all of the following night. Elijah Bayes, who had never seen a train, was perched on the roof of the one-room depot and refused to come down. He said he wanted to get a long distance squint at the contraption and if it looked dangerous he intended to take us girls away from the danger zone at once. Poor Elijah; he fell asleep on the depot roof about 1 o'clock the next morning and fell to the ground. As usual, he started to sing a hymn--something about being in the hands of Providence, for he had been dreaming about the train and before he was really wide awake he thought it had attacked him.

The next day, shortly after the noon hour, one of the miners shouted that he saw smoke on the horizon, and from that time on there was bedlam. Men shouted, women shrieked and cried, children ran away to the rocks and tried to hide, horses reared and snorted, many of the Mexican women prayed, and still the "Monster" came along.

First Train Arrives

Soon it neared the depot and stopped with a clang of bell, a hiss of steam and a grinding of hand brakes. All at once it started up again to move a hundred feet farther along the line; it was a light engine with a rather heavy load and the drive wheels started to race. This was too much for an Indian chief who had hitherto remained calmly by, and he made for his horse and was soon lost to sight on the horizon. In his hast he forgot to retrieve his daughter, "Twinkling Sunbeam," and so she was there to witness the grand finale.

Elijah Bayes said they should offer up a song of thanks because no damage had been done, and so he with his shrill tenor voice, led the singing.

How well I remember that hour when as a girl I stood there surrounded by strangers of every type and classification, singing as I never had sung before, meantime keeping a watchful eye on the engine, which, by the way was only about one-fourth as large as many in use today.

City of San Diego

It will be remembered that when we arrived in Dan Diego after the Civil War there was no new town and very little of what was and is called "old Town." But during the course of time a goodly number of people had come to the place and some of the more optimistic and ambitious people were already calling it a city. One of the main reasons for the slow growth was the lack of a good water supply. Water at that time was obtained from a series of wells sunk in

the San Diego river bed or on the banks, and these wells did not supply enough water for domestic use, and in all of the town there were no water pipes. The water was hauled to the various residences and other places in large barrels and the driver of the team was called the "water man."

Use Water Buckets

There were two large heavy buckets hanging on the back end of the barrel and when this man stopped at a house to deliver water he filled the buckets at the back end by turning a faucet. Each home usually had a large barrel at the back door, and the water man would carry the water to these barrels until they were filled. Each family was very careful to see that he filled the barrel, as he came but once in three days and often times his trips were a week apart. You can readily see that water was very precious, because the people had to use it for many things, and usually the day before the water wagon came around water "rations" were cut to the limit.

Many times the folks went to bed thirsty, so as to conserve the water for the following day. After a long time there was a reservoir built back of Julian in the mountains, and I believe the government built it. Water was sent to San Diego in an open flume, but this proved to be very unsatisfactory and unsanitary. Many of the people died because they drank this water. All of the people were asked to boil it.

Then in 1887, approximately, a great boom started in the city of San Diego and it was like the wild excitement of the gold miners' rush to Julian several years earlier.

"The stream of time is moving, on through the golden years;
We find our hair is graying, but have no doubts nor fears,
For love has shown us vistas of the eternal strand--
The only place that's better than this enchanted land."

In this present day and age it seems like a far cry to the time when we as children in the 60's, crossed the vast plains, to reach the Golden State. A strange thing, but true--we had believed, up to the time we arrived in California that San Diego was quite a city. We were astonished and somewhat perplexed to find only four or five buildings.

No words can express the trouble the early settlers encountered before a real civilization started. Water was more precious than gold. If one of the pioneers came home from a rabbit hunt with a half dozen rabbits it was the talk of our little section for a week, as meat was very scarce.

Many "Temporaries"

Most of the people who came to the vicinity of San Diego during those early years, were what were called "temporaries". As a matter of fact, they did not expect to stay in that vicinity long. All of them it seemed, believed that it was simply a stopping place, where they could rest until they could make a new start for San Francisco. Beyond question everyone believed that, that city was destined to be the real metropolis of the west. When a train of covered wagons came along, the first question asked, as a rule, was, "how much farther to San Francisco.

Of course there were some exceptions, a number believing that the mission town of San Gabriel would eventually eclipse San Francisco, and a few thought that Los Angeles would some day be "Quite a place". However, no one that we knew ever imagined that the latter city would ever become what it is today.

Water Was Scarce

I was 9 years old when I arrived in California, as I have said before, and that is an age when one remembers. I can recall the hardships, the disappointments and the vain hopes of those in our family and neighboring families. We had to almost fight to get enough water to drink. The modern problems such as high taxes, graft, prohibition and other matters, were not even thought of. As for myself,

I thought it well worth going through it all just to have the privilege of seeing the first train come to San Diego. That was joy supreme and there was only one thing to mar our happiness and that was the accident which befell our good friend and boon companion, old Elijah Bayes, when he fell off the roof of the stage coach station.

In the 80's a boom suddenly started in San Diego. That is, it started in the new part of the town. It seemed to spring from nowhere and had all the driving force of a tornado. People who, prior to that time had, had no confidence in the town went land crazy over night.

Land For Hair Cut

Two or three days before the boom started a man by the name of Jeremiah Lensdale, walked into a barber shop to get a shave. There was a dog, a large black dog, lying on the floor, now and then making a lazy effort to grab a flea. This man told the barber he had no money for a hair cut but offered a lot in San Diego for the regular cash charge. After some dickering and chafing the deal was made. That afternoon the barber sold the lot for ten dollars and threw in his dog. Four days later the same lot sold for twelve hundred dollars cash.

It seemed that people all over the county had suddenly decided to come west, and apparently "west" meant San Diego. At first they started drifting in from the northern part of the state until there were several thousand newcomers then the easterners began to arrive. Many of them came to northern towns first, and then south by rail. All of us who were living in that part of the country during the gold stampede to Julian thought that was one of the greatest spectackles we would ever witness, but it was nothing in comparison to this later boom.

Arrive From Everywhere

Many came from Mexico and South America, there were French, Germans, English, Belgians, Russians, Italian, in fact it was said by one of the circuit riders, who by the way, was some what of a linguist and a graduate of Oxford, that more than seventy different languages were spoken in San Diego when the boom was in full swing. Rich men came from the east with the idea of speculating in land but when they arrived they discovered that all the money they possessed would not secure them a place to sleep indoors. Hundreds of people walked up and down the streetseach day and every night, begging and pleading for a place to take their families.

Every private home in the city turned into an apartment, and in some cases there were five and six people in a room. People with plenty of money bid for the privilege of securing a porch where their effects could be stored and where they could snatch a dew minutes of rest.

$18,000 for a Lot

Our good friend Elijah Bayes, of rattlesnake fame, was one of the lucky ones, for he had traded a pair of gum boots for a lot before the boom, and in spite of the fact that he was urged to sell, he held on until finally a man, Jacob Schriss, of Philadelphia, offered him $18,000 for the lot which had two hundred feet frontage, and the offer was accepted. After the papers had been made out and the deal closed, the new proprietor jokingly asked Elijah what he was going to do with so much money, and he said, "Mister you came from Philadelphia all the way out here to Californy to give me $18,000 for a little piece of dry ground. Now, I'll tell ye what I'm goin' to do; I'm going back to my home town, Philadelphy, where you come from and spend the rest of my years in ease and luxury."

However, old Elijah did not go back east, for when the time came to start, he finally decided that the "west was good enough for him".

Bought Lot Back

Sometime afterward he bought his lot back for $1900. At that time fortunes were made and lost in an hour. One poor fellow I knew very well made a very

large fortune in one month. He had been just an ordinary real estate man at the beginning of the boom, and the sudden turn to prosperity unbalanced his mind. For a long time he was obsessed with the idea that he and his family were going to starve. But booms come and booms go, and in this case it left havoc behind.

"Out here in California, where mountains meet the sea;
Where souls of men are smiling and thoughts of men are free,
We have a larger vision, and when we view the past,
We find that we are winners, have reached our goal at last."

When we came to California just after the Civil War, the first Christmas we celebrated, was far different from the ones in more recent years. That Yule tide season more than sixty-five years ago remains as distinct in memory as though it were yesterday. In my pretty home in Bell I often sit and think of the dreams of the old days, and how some of them really came true.

Our first Christmas in this state was a bright, warm, sunny day and there was peace and contentment in our humble little home of one room. We four children were well and strong and our father and mother often thanked God in our presence for the health and strength which we all enjoyed.

My brother Seaborn had been working for severl weeks for one of the sheep herders who was caring for thousands and thousands of sheep owned by a wealthy man living in San Diego. As pay for his work, Seaborn was given a sheep to bring home for our meat and for Christmas, the herder gave him a lamb as a special treat. How excited and happy Seaborn was when he came home on the evening of December 23, bringing a nice lamb which the herder had given him. Then the day before Christmas, father killed and dressed it and mother prepared it for roasting in her Dutch oven that she had brought from Texas.

We had no stove of any kind, but there was a good fire out of doors made from oak logs. Over this fire, mother roasted our lamb and with it she cooked plenty of browned potatoes and made a delicious brown gravy to eat on our bread, as we had no butter or butter substitute. She had made a nice big batch of "sour dough" bread on the day before Christmas. Also, as a special treat, she had made a nice big brown pie filled with steamed, dried apples. At that time there was no fresh fruit to be had in our section, though there was a little around Los Angeles, but it was very expensive.

In these days all fruit and vegetables were shipped by steamer from San Francisco or overland by four horse stages of freight teams, which took days and days of hard traveling to reach San Diego. I wonder if one can imagine the difference between traveling over smooth, motor roads and what it was in those days.

Referring to our Christmas dinner, we were grateful for the delicious dried apple pie as people are today for candy, mince pie, pumpkin pie and fruit cake and all the many rich desserts we now enjoy.

In the afternoon before Christmas, there was much excitement and rejoicing in our little home as two guests arrived unexpectedly. They were Mr. and Mrs. Wolfskill, our friends from Escondido, about 12 miles away. Of course 12 miles is but a few minutes' travel today, but they were on the way about three hours as the roads were very rocky, rough and narrow.

Get First Oranges

They came in a spring wagon drawn by two horses. Our guests brought us a gift of about a dozen oranges. We had never seen or tasted an orange and were greatly pleased with their beauty, but did not care very much for the taste of them. Of course they were very sour, very little like the oranges we have today. There were no navels or valencias in those days. These were seedlings they had brought from Los Angeles. So, in addition to the dried apple pie for dessert, we had a real golden oranges at our first Christmas dinner in California.

In our one-room cabin there were two home-made beds, a table which father had made from thick redwood planks which had been shipped from northern California to San Diego, the one chair that father had made for mother before leaving Texas,

a number of three-legged stools and five large shelves which served as a linen closet, dish cupboard and dresser in which to put our extra clothing.

While mother and Margaret were preparing the food on our out-door fire my sister, Mollie and I arranged the table as nicely as we could and it all looked very grand to us when it was finished, for we had put on Mother's best home-spun table cloth and though we had nothing except our set of tin dishes which we had used when crossing the plains, they were scoured bright and clean the day before with sand so that each one fairly shone.

Mollie said, "Oh, if we only had a bouquet for the center of the table." Then I had a happy thought, "let's put the oranges in the middle of the table. They will look pretty there."

When at last everything was ready and we had gathered around the table, father asked God's blessing on our humble meal, for we were thankful and we honored God for all His goodness to us.

Plan Next Christmas

After the dinner, and our work was finished, we children went for a walk down the narrow, rocky roadway and wondered somuch as we walked along, what the next Christmas would bring to us and if we would still be where we were now. On each side of the road grew sage brush and schumack bushes, and a few scattering oak trees on the hills among the rocks. There were cattle and sheep roaming all over the hills and valleys in an effort to find something to eat, but as there had been no rain since the last spring, the poor animals were nearly starved to death.

At this time there were no schools, no churches nor missions anywhere outside of San Diego to which we could go for entertainment or services of any kind, so to boys and girls of today, our lives would seem very dull, and with no excite ment or pleasures; but we were happy and contented in a quiet, thoughtful manner. We often played with little horn toads and would put strings around them and fasten the strings to our tiny doll carts made of small pasteboard boxes. Our dolls were rag dolls which we had made ourselves.

As to gifts, we never thought of receiving any, for we knew it was impossible as there was no money with which to buy them and there were few given in those days, even among rich people; that is in California early days.

Watch Setting Sun

Our walk brought us to the foot of Mule Hill, and sister suggested that we climb it and watch the sun go down. After watching all the glory of a beautiful California sunset, we slowly turned away and hurried homeward, as the shadows were growing and the twinkling light of our little cabin looked very welcome. Mother had lighted our little kerosene lamp and was standing in the doorway watching for us. We were glad to get back home and especially happy when father said he would sing some of the old English Christmas carols to us before bedtime. How sweet and peaceful it sounded to us, way out there more than 30 miles from any of our friends and acquaintances, except for the Wolfskills who lived at Escondido.

Thus ended our first Christmas day in California

I, Mary Johnson, was given permission by Edith Wilcox, Great Great Grandaughter of Matilda Dickinson, and owner of the folder containing this hand typed account from memoirs, to copy and publish on the Internet.

Thank You Edith for sharing a great piece of American History of your family from the 1860's.